SKATOLOGY

Fall 2025 Issue

Newsletter of the ASA Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology

INSIDE

Chair's Report

SKAT Colleagues,

These are exceptionally challenging times. Every morning, I cringe as I open my news app, bracing myself before reading about the new terrors that have arisen since I last checked. City after city has been overwhelmed by ICE raids and the national guard, as people are being abducted off the street or on their way to drop their children off at school. RFK Jr. may remove Hepatitis C, MMRV and the COVID-19 vaccines from the recommended vaccine schedule (rendering these vaccines more difficult to access depending on insurance status, provider, and state of residence), and he may re-impose FDA restrictions on mifepristone, robbing the thousands of pregnant people who live in states with abortion bans from being able to receive medication abortion through the mail. USAID has been dismantled, and as a result, millions of people throughout the world will struggle to access life-saving medication, water/sanitation systems, educations, jobs – poverty rates will skyrocket. One and a half million people have lost their Medicaid coverage in the US in 2025, and Affordable Care Act subsidies are also on the chopping block, rendering healthcare out of reach for millions. The so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" will also shutter clinics, make Medicaid harder to access, and put new restrictions on SNAP benefits. Despite the so-called ceasefire in Gaza, Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank face violence, displacement, poverty and starvation – their suffering is sanctioned and enacted through funding, technology and expertise from US corporations and governmental actors. These are just a few of the nightmares that our families, students, colleagues, and communities are facing. Not only does this make it difficult for us to continue our teaching, research, and community-engagement, but it makes the world more ontologically and materially insecure.

Science and knowledge production are also under attack – our funding, methodologies, ethics, and expertise are challenged daily. But this also, perhaps, offers us new opportunities to create institutions and knowledge infrastructure that is more equitable and justice-oriented, and to engage in knowledge insurrection that contests institutionalized best-practices that are racist, xenophobic, ableist, heteronormative, and misogynist.

Every day, as I witness the ways in which our new realities are disrupting the educational opportunities my students deserve, I am overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness. And yet, there are so many ways the SKAT community is rising to the occasion. And I would like to mention some of these efforts and to invite you to get involved!

First, SKAT is running a series of virtual workshops to provide tips and strategies for graduate students who plan to enter the academic and alternative-academic job market. Our first virtual workshop (organized by Mel Jeske with Emily Vasquez, Cal Garrett, and Mary Shi as panelists) was held on November 14, and

50 people attended! The recording is still available, and accessible at this link. In the spring term, we will have one more academic job market workshop with panelists who have recently served on hiring committees. In addition, Alex Hanna and danah boyd are organizing two panels to offer tips and guidelines for people entering the alternative-academic job market. So watch for those announcements and join these sessions!

In addition, on January 22 from 12-1pm central time, SKAT is hosting a virtual panel that will focus on teaching "controversial" topics including issues related to DEI, gender, race and racism, and imperialism within and beyond science, knowledge, and technology studies. As pedagogical freedoms are increasingly limited in the current political climate, this forum will share information and exchange strategies for maintaining academic freedom. The panel will feature: Cedric de Leon, Kristen Schilt, Peter Forberg, JT Thomas, Daniel Lee Kleinman, and Nathan Kalman-Lamb. You can register at this link. Thanks to Dan Morrison for organizing! Please join this important panel in January.

In addition, we have an amazing line-up of panels scheduled for ASA. We have two invited sessions. The first is on "Knowledge Under Pressure: Defending Academic Freedom in Contentious Times," and will feature Ruha Benjamin, Gil Eyal, Jason Owen-Smith, Erin Cech, and Janet Shim. The second is on "Changing Science in Precarious Times," and will feature Steven Epstein, Jill Fisher, Scott Frickel, Shobita Parthasarathy, and Oliver Rollins. We have a series of amazing panels to which you can submit your own work. They are on the following topics: Sociology of Climate Change, Disrupting Racial Formations in Science and Technology, Global Knowledge in Uncertain Times, Expertise in the Age of AI, Decolonial Knowledges, Reproductive Subversion Reconsidered, and the Geopolitics of Technology and Innovation. Full descriptions of the panels are included in this newsletter. Please plan to submit!!! The online system is already available and the deadline for submissions is February 25, 2026.

We also have open award calls, and I encourage you to submit your work for consideration. SKAT awards include the Robert K Merton Book Prize, the Star Nelkin Article Award, the Hacker-Mullins Student Paper Award, the Emancipatory Practice Award, and the Ida B. Wells-Troy Duster Paper Award for Early Career Scholars. Read on in this newsletter to learn more details about our awards, and some great news about our fundraising efforts!

Finally (drum roll please), SKAT is putting on a pre-conference! This will be the first SKAT pre-conference in over ten years. The conference theme *Science, Knowledge, and Technology Now: Meeting the Moment, Engendering Just Futures* draws attention to the many challenges and crises that society faces at the current moment, and the ways in which science and technology intersect with these social transformations. While scientific knowledge production and emerging technologies can exacerbate inequalities, scientific innovation can also help shape a future that is more inclusive and just. We invite members of SKAT to come together to reflect on the road ahead for our subfield, and how we can work

SKAT Officers

2025-2026

Chair
Claire Decoteau,
University of Illinois Chicago

Chair-Elect
Rene Almeling,
Yale University

Past Chair
Janet Vertesi,
Princeton University

Section Secretary/Treasurer
Emily Vasquez,
Wesleyan University

Council Members
Sharla Alegria,
University of Toronto
Alex Hanna,
Distributed AI Research Institute
Martine Lappé,
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
Luciana de Souza Leão,
University of Michigan
Benjamin Shestakofsky,
University of Pennsylvania
Catherine Tan, *Vassar College*

Student Council Members
Mary Shi, *University of Michigan*
Jorge Ochoa,
Northwestern University

together to build, collaborate, and engender just futures. The conference will feature plenary sessions including speakers such as Alondra Nelson, Steven Epstein, Janet Shim, Scott Frickel, and more. The pre-conference will be held at the Division for Interdisciplinary Studies at The City College of New York, CUNY on August 7, 2026. We will be sending out a call for paper abstracts soon, so watch for that and please join us in New York for this exciting event!

In solidarity,

Claire

Claire Laurier Decoteau, PhD
SKAT Chair
Professor of Sociology
University of Illinois at Chicago

Our Section Logo

SKAT Committees (2025-2026)

We thank the following members for serving on the section's committees this academic year.

Anti-Racism in SKAT: Shannon Malone Gonzalez (Chair), Dan Morrison, Jennifer Carrera, Elaine Draper

Communications: Jorge Ochoa (Chair), Vasundhara Kaul, Jeba Humayra, Jian Meng, Zahra Abba Omar

Events: Larry Au (Chair), Alyson Spurgas, Catherine Tan, Natalie Aviles, Zach Griffin

Fundraising: Jill Fisher (Chair), Stephanie Nairn, Claire Decoteau

Hacker-Mullins Award: Zach Griffin (Chair), Anabella Afra Boateng, Janna Huang, Torsten Voight, Janet Vertesi

Membership: Ben Shestakotsky (Chair), Jeremy Brenner Levoy, Martine Lappe, Kate Burrows

Mentorship: Jennifer Singh (Chair), Luciana de Souza Leao, Jina Lee, Gwendolyn Berumen, Ni'Shele Jackson

Merton Award: Larry Au (Chair), Kushan Dasgupta, Jordan Brensinger, Catherine Tan

Star-Nelkin Award: Sharla Algeria (Chair), Nicole Foti, Amanda Sikirica, Dan Navon

Program Committee: Claire Decoteau (Chair), Dan Navon, Joan Robinson, Alex Hanna, Santiago Molina, Mel Jeske, Mary Shi

Roundtables Committee: Fithawee Tzeggai (chair), Sutina Chou, Jingang Lyu, Xinyan W

Virtual Workshop Committee: Mel Jeske (Chair, Academic Market Workshop), Dan Morrison (Chair, Academic Teaching Workshop), Alex Hanna (Chair, Alt-Ac Workshop), Katherine Furl, Victoria Brockett, Anabella Afra Boateng, Mary Shi, Jane Pryma, dana boyd, Xi Wang

Pre-Conference Committee: Claire Decoteau (Chair), Joan Robinson, Larry Au, Emily Vasquez, Zach Griffin, Jorge Ochoa, Natalie Aviles, Mel Jeske, Santiago Molina

Check out our **website**:
http://asaskat.com

We are also on **BlueSky**:
@asaskat.bsky.social

A note from the newsletter team

Thank you for reading this issue of the SKAT Newsletter!

If you have any announcements (new publications, events, activities) that you would like us to share, please feel free to tag us on social media or reach out to jorge.ochoa@northwestern.edu.

We also accept pitches for blog posts about your research, teaching, and community engagement work. If you would like to write for us, please be in touch.

- Jorge Ochoa, Vasundhara Kaul, Jeba Humayra Prithwi, Jian Meng, and Zahra Abba Omar

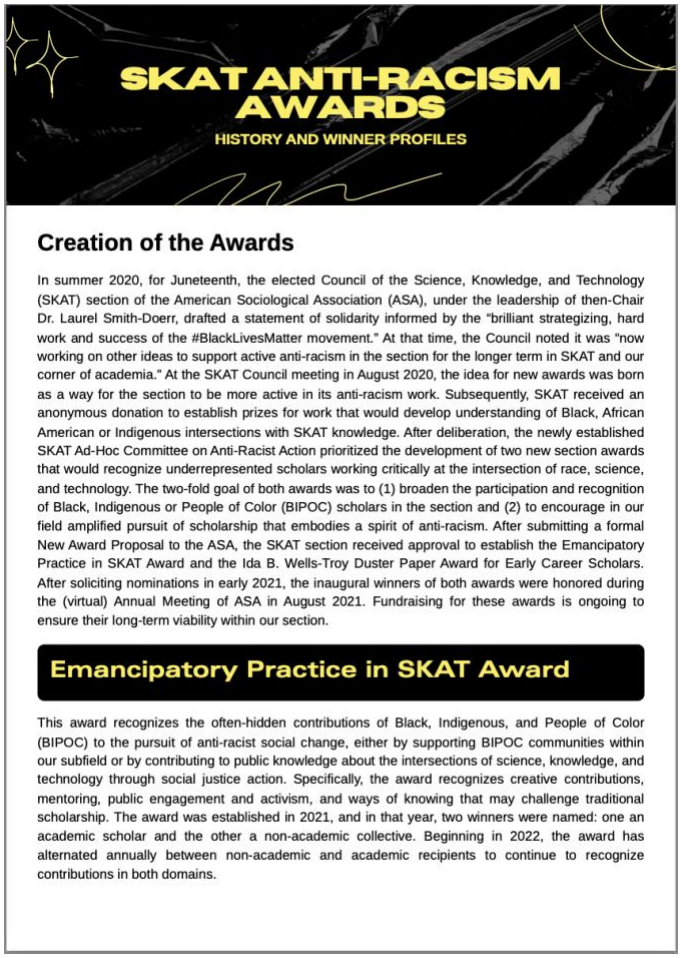
SKAT Anti-Racism Awards Fundraising Update!

With our Fall 2025 fundraising campaign, we have met our goal! We have now raised enough funds for the two anti-racism in SKAT awards to qualify for a special interest-bearing account from the ASA. We received nearly $5,000 in donations this fall, which has gotten our funds balance to $20,000. Thank you not only to all of our donors this fall but also to all SKAT members who have contributed since the awards were established five years ago. Your generosity has ensured the sustainability of these awards for decades.

Our section's two anti-racism awards—the Ida B. Wells-Troy Duster and Emancipatory Practice Awards—are intended to foster and elevate essential work in our subfield. The first recognizes outstanding scholarship from early-career scholars that advances understanding of Black, African American, or Indigenous intersections with science, knowledge, and technology. The second recognizes anti-racist social action within our subfield or through broader public engagement.

As part of our fundraising drive, we created a report highlighting the winners of both awards to show the kinds of scholarship our awards (and donations) have supported for the past five years. The report—available via this link—is designed to remind members of SKAT's history establishing these awards and the amazing work our section has been able to celebrate.

- Jill Fisher, Stephanie Nairn, and Claire Decoteau, the 2025-2026 SKAT Fundraising Committee



SKAT ANTI-RACISM AWARDS

HISTORY AND WINNER PROFILES

Creation of the Awards

In summer 2020, for Juneteenth, the elected Council of the Science, Knowledge, and Technology (SKAT) section of the American Sociological Association (ASA), under the leadership of then-Chair Dr. Laurel Smith-Doerr, drafted a statement of solidarity informed by the "brilliant strategizing, hard work and success of the #BlackLivesMatter movement." At that time, the Council noted it was "now working on other ideas to support active anti-racism in the section for the longer term in SKAT and our corner of academia." At the SKAT Council meeting in August 2020, the idea for new awards was born as a way for the section to be more active in its anti-racism work. Subsequently, SKAT received an anonymous donation to establish prizes for work that would develop understanding of Black, African American or Indigenous intersections with SKAT knowledge. After deliberation, the newly established SKAT Ad-Hoc Committee on Anti-Racist Action prioritized the development of two new section awards that would recognize underrepresented scholars working critically at the intersection of race, science, and technology. The two-fold goal of both awards was to (1) broaden the participation and recognition of Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC) scholars in the section and (2) to encourage in our field amplified pursuit of scholarship that embodies a spirit of anti-racism. After submitting a formal New Award Proposal to the ASA, the SKAT section received approval to establish the Emancipatory Practice in SKAT Award and the Ida B. Wells-Troy Duster Paper Award for Early Career Scholars. After soliciting nominations in early 2021, the inaugural winners of both awards were honored during the (virtual) Annual Meeting of ASA in August 2021. Fundraising for these awards is ongoing to ensure their long-term viability within our section.

Emancipatory Practice in SKAT Award

This award recognizes the often-hidden contributions of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) to the pursuit of anti-racist social change, either by supporting BIPOC communities within our subfield or by contributing to public knowledge about the intersections of science, knowledge, and technology through social justice action. Specifically, the award recognizes creative contributions, mentoring, public engagement and activism, and ways of knowing that may challenge traditional scholarship. The award was established in 2021, and in that year, two winners were named: one an academic scholar and the other a non-academic collective. Beginning in 2022, the award has alternated annually between non-academic and academic recipients to continue to recognize contributions in both domains.

2026 SKAT Sessions

Please find information about the SKAT Sessions of the ASA 2026 annual meeting below. The meeting will be held in New York City from August 7-11. The deadline for submission is February 25, 2026, at 9:00 pm eastern. Please visit this link for more information.

Knowledge under Pressure: Defending Academic Freedom in Contentious Times (Invited Session)

In early 2025, the financial infrastructure and autonomy of academic institutions and knowledge production came under attack. This invited panel features scholars who speak directly to the impact of increasing federal oversight of academic budgets, admissions and hiring, and policies around free speech and student activism. Panelists will explore the implications of reductions in research funding, mandates to reduce diversity and inclusion, crackdowns on free speech and protests against the genocide in Gaza, immigration raids on campuses, and the ability to research topics as diverse as climate change and trans affirming healthcare. Panelists will also attend to specific challenges that scholars in science/technology studies have faced.

Organizer: Claire Decoteau

Panelists:
Ruha Benjamin, Princeton University
Gil Eyal, Columbia University
Jason Owen-Smith, University of Michigan
Erin Cech, University of Michigan
Janet Shim, University of California, San Francisco

***

Changing Science in Precarious Times (Invited Session)

This invited panel explores how science and technology studies (STS) can shed light on the current crisis of scientific norms, leadership, and accepted practices in the United States. While leaders in politics, public health, and biomedical research have been quick to call for a return to "normal" and to save and restore science, we consider the value of nuanced critique and reflection to rethink science-as-usual. We ask panelists to reflect on other times of tension within science and medicine, the value STS brings to analyzing and critiquing the current climate, and advice they may give to practitioners and publics.

Session Organizers: Melanie Jeske, Claire Decoteau

Panelists:
Steven Epstein, Northwestern University
Oliver Rollins, MIT
Jill Fisher, UNC Chapel Hill
Shobita Parthasarathy, University of Michigan Ann Arbor
Scott Frickel, Brown University

***

The Sociology of Climate Change (Open Panel)

This open panel on "The Sociology of Climate Change" is jointly-sponsored by the ASA sections on Science, Knowledge, and Technology (SKAT) and Environmental Sociology. We aim for the panel to provide a forum for innovative sociological research on climate change, broadly defined. We welcome research using a wide range of sociological methods and focused on any aspect of climate change.

Organizers: Rene Almeling and Kerry Ard listed as co-requestors and co-organizers
Co-Sponsored with Environmental Sociology

***

Disrupting Racial Formations in Science and Technology (Open Panel)

This session explores the entanglements of race and scientific knowledge production, highlighting how racial logics shape and are shaped by technological and epistemic practices. Technological infrastructures—such as biometric surveillance, predictive analytics, and border enforcement systems—have intensified in the current moment, fueling new and old modes of racialized terror, especially against migrants, refugees, and other minoritized populations. These systems not only help inscribe and fix certain hierarchized "truths" about racialized groups but also actively produce harm under the guise of scientific neutrality, public health, and national security. Thus, in a moment acutely marked by increasing political polarization, genocide, attacks on democratic institutions, and the resurgence of eugenic rhetoric, it is crucial that sociologists confront how science and technology contribute to the justification and weaponization of racial violence, even as political attacks seek to undermine such knowledges as a source of public good in other areas health, education, and law.

This session aims to investigate the role of epistemic authority in the reproduction or disruption of racialized (and ethnic) hierarchies. We especially welcome work that teaches us how to better understand the value of racial theory for STS studies, and/or papers that demonstrate the value of STS methods and tools for the sociology of race and ethnicity. For example, papers that illuminate how scientific and technological systems are embedded in broader structures of racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and global inequality—and how these systems can be reimagined through resistance and intervention. This co-sponsored session between SKAT and SREM reflects a timely and necessary dialogue across the sections, aiming to foster interdisciplinary engagement and critical reflection. In putting sociology to work, we center solution-oriented research, theoretically engaged scholarship, and interdisciplinary dialogue, with the goal of fostering a future sociological blueprint that dismantles racial and ethnic formations in science and technology.

Organizer: Oliver Rollins
Co-Sponsored with Section on Race and Ethnic Minorities

***

Science, Technology, and Global Knowledge in Uncertain Times (Open Panel)

This panel examines how science, technology, and knowledge production are reconfigured under conditions of global uncertainty. We invite scholarship that explores how social, political, and economic uncertainties impact knowledge production globally. Papers may address a range of topics, including, but not limited to: contestation of climate knowledge, counter-expertise in vaccination and gender-affirming care debates; shifting institutional mandates and best practices on knowledge production; cuts to U.S. research funding, services, and foreign aid; visa regimes and scientific mobility/immobility; and AI infrastructures and

development. This joint panel, co-sponsored by the Science, Knowledge, and Technology (SKAT) Section and the Global and Transnational Sociology (GATS) Section, welcomes submissions from diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives, particularly those that consider knowledge production through a transnational lens.

Organizer: Xiaogao Zhou
Co-sponsored with Global & Transnational Sociology

***

Expertise in the Age of AI (Open Panel)

How is expertise being reconfigured and remade by the rollout of artificial intelligence? Experts in a host of key fields were already facing a range of threats to their status and authority in recent years. Now, AI confronts experts with a series of new challenges and opportunities, raising important questions for sociologists of knowledge studying everything from science and medicine through to education and lay mis/information consumption. This panel invites theoretical and empirical papers on the way AI is changing expert labor and knowledge production, how it is realigning networks of expertise, how publics engage with it in lieu of credentialed experts, how it can variously retrench and rework power and inequalities, or how it is being resisted and restrained.

Organizer: Dan Navon

***

Decolonial Knowledge(s) (Open Panel)

Research in the sociology of empire and colonialism, and scholarship in science and technology studies has drawn attention to the relationship between the production of knowledge, processes of colonization, and colonization's enduring impact. This relationship has been proven to be enduring and powerful: from tracing the role of colonial experts in gathering information to guide the extractive and oppressive forces of global empires, to the development and testing of technologies of surveillance on colonized communities for their sale in global markets. In an effort to advance theoretical frameworks for analyzing this relationship, this panel will explore ongoing efforts to interrogate and challenge the colonial legacies that shape contemporary knowledge practices, institutions, and technologies. By situating science and technology in historical and contemporary processes of conquest, extraction, and domination, this panel aims to foster space for critical and creative reimaginings of practices of knowledge production, circulation, and valuation.

We invite papers that examine how coloniality continues to structure what is recognized as scientific or authoritative expertise, and how subjugated knowledge and expertise emerge, persist, or are suppressed. In addition to studies that address the relationship between practices of knowledge production and colonization, we are interested in case studies that highlight resistance and innovation–whether through Afro-diasporic epistemologies, crip, feminist and queer thought, or Indigenous ways of knowing–that challenge institutions of domination and propose new ways of relating to the world.

Potential topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Colonial legacies in classification, measurement, and standardization
- Indigenous knowledge practices and technologies in relation to environmental stewardship or health, data and knowledge acquisition, and scientific governance
- Decolonial critiques of global data regimes, AI, and digital infrastructures
- Medical and/or public health practices that challenge empire

Our goal is to examine what it means to do sociology of science, technology, and knowledge in a world marked by coloniality, and to imagine more just, equitable, and liberatory epistemic futures.

Organizers: Santiago Molina and Alex Hanna

***

Reproductive Subversion Reconsidered: Contemporary Politics of Reproductive Knowledge (Open Panel)

Across labs, clinics, classrooms, and courts, the production and circulation of reproductive knowledge is currently being reshaped by political, legal, and technological transformations. Laws governing abortion and fertility care and funding uncertainties constrain not only access to services but also the making and maintenance of expertise itself — what researchers and practitioners can teach, learn, and do. Meanwhile, shifting technologies alter the boundaries between professional, lay, and automated knowledge, generating new competencies, forms of resistance, and epistemic loss.

This session invites scholarship that examines how contemporary reproductive knowledge is organized, practiced, and contested across social, legal, and technological domains. We encourage papers that explore the transmission, erosion, or reconfiguration of reproductive skills and techniques; examine how law, policy, and politics shape what can be known, taught, or practiced; or assess how reproductive knowledge and practices circulate among medical professionals, activists, educators, and patients. Empirical papers and/or those that interrogate mainstream or popular narratives are especially welcome. We encourage submissions that address racial, class, and ability inequalities, including those focusing on the Global South.

Potential topics include but are not limited to**:** underground reproduction networks; funding for reproduction research; the governance of abortion knowledge; the de- or re-skilling of reproductive labor; the gain or loss of reproductive skills, techniques, or tools due to for-profit medicine and/or the fear of malpractice; lay knowledge circulation about reproduction; the political economy of reproductive technologies; and reproductive epistemologies fueled by backlash.

Organizer: Joan Robinson

***

The Geopolitics of Technology and Innovation (Open Panel)

This is an open session sponsored by the section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology. During the Biden administration, initiatives such as the Green New Deal and CHIPS and Science Act signaled a turn away from market-led regulation of science and technology and the return of industrial policy. The Trump administration's aggressive use of tariffs in the name of restoring American manufacturing, securing access to rare earth minerals, and improving domestic resilience has consolidated this turn away from neoliberal governance. Today, from chip wars and AI to the green transition, it is increasingly common to understand scientific innovation as a strategic domain of international competition and a matter of national security. This session invites papers relating to the geopolitics of technology and innovation and the emerging political economy thereof. Papers of a wide variety of methods and substantive foci are welcome. Topics could include, for example, historical investigations of the entanglements between the military and research funding, analyses of contemporary trends in foreign policy discourse, international struggles over AI initiatives, or the impacts of recent immigration policies on scientific research.

Organizer: Mary Shi

2026 Call for Award Nominations

To nominate yourselves or your colleagues for SKAT section awards, please see the information below.

Robert K Merton Book Award
Deadline: 1/15/2026

The Science, Knowledge, and Technology Section invites nominations (including self-nominations) for the 2026 Robert K. Merton Book Award. The award is given annually in recognition of an outstanding book on science, knowledge, and/or technology published during the preceding two years (2025 or 2024). Single or multi-authored works are eligible, but not edited volumes. The winner will be honored at the ASA Annual Meeting in New York City (August 2026).

Nominations or requests for more information should be sent to the committee chair, Larry Au (lau1@ccny.cuny.edu). No nominating statement or letter is required (nor will be considered as part of the committee's review of nominations). Print copies of nominated books must be received by all committee members by February 15, 2026. Please contact the committee chair for mailing addresses. All nominees must be registered members of the ASA and SKAT to be considered for this award.

***

Star Nelkin Award
Deadline: 3/15/26

The Science, Knowledge, and Technology Section of the American Sociological Association invites nominations for the 2026 Star-Nelkin Paper Award. ASA-SKAT welcomes nominations (including self-nominations) of published articles that advance the field of sociology of science, knowledge, and technology. To be eligible, an article's earliest date of publication in a scholarly journal (whether online or in print) must have been in 2024 or 2025. The winner will be honored at the ASA Annual Meeting in New York (August 2026). Please complete this form to nominate an article by March 15, 2026. Contact the committee chair, Sharla Alegria (sharla.alegria@utoronto.ca) with any questions. No nominating statement or letter is required (nor will be considered as part of the committee's review of nominations). We especially encourage submissions of work written by scholars who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). Send any requests for more information to the award committee chair. Please note that all nominees must be registered members of the ASA and SKAT to be considered for this award.

***

Hacker-Mullins Student Paper Award
Deadline: 3/15/2026

The Science, Knowledge and Technology Section invites submissions for the 2026 Hacker-Mullins Graduate Student Paper Award. The winner will be honored at the ASA meetings in New York City (August 2026) and will receive a certificate and a $350 monetary prize. The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2026.

We welcome and encourage self-nominations. We especially encourage submissions of work written by scholars who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). To be eligible, the primary author must be a student at the time of the paper's writing, and a student or postdoc at time of submission to the award committee. Published and unpublished papers of no more than 10,000 words (excluding references)

are accepted; if published, the article must have been published no earlier than 2024. Each student may submit only one paper in which they are the primary author. For papers co-authored with faculty members, a paper is eligible if the graduate student of the paper is the primary author and the non-student author must attest to the student's primary role in the design, execution, and writing of the paper.

Please send a PDF of the nominated paper to the committee chair, Zach Griffen, at zachary.griffen@nyu.edu. In the submission email, please include information about the status and provenance of the paper: if it has benefitted from peer review, if it has been considered or accepted for publication, or if it is an unpublished part of a dissertation or other research project. In addition, please indicate whether the student author has achieved PhD candidacy. These are not requirements for the award but will assist the committee in considering equity.

All nominees must be registered members of both ASA and SKAT to be considered for this award. Student membership is at a reduced rate. If this presents a financial hardship for you, please contact the chair (Zach Griffen – zachary.griffen@nyu.edu) to discuss options.

***

2026 Emancipatory Practice Award
Deadline: 3/15/2026

The Science, Knowledge, and Technology (SKAT) Section invites nominations for the Emancipatory Practice in SKAT Award. This award recognizes the pursuit of anti-racist social change, either by supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities within our subfield or by supporting broader public engagement with SKAT knowledge and principles. SKAT research encompasses a broad range of topics, including the production, circulation, and understanding of scientific, technical and medical knowledge, the social shaping and impact of science and technology, and impact of science and technology on society. Nominations are welcome for creative contributions and work not traditionally recognized in the academy, including mentoring, public engagement through social media/blogs, activist leadership, artistic works including films, and social justice curriculum development.

The emancipatory practice award alternates between non-academic and academic recipients. In even years, nominees should be non-academic, and in odd years, they should be academic.

Because this is a call for 2026, the committee invites *non-academic nominees*. If a collective contribution is nominated, 1-2 leaders should be identified to receive the award. This award is open to all persons regardless of identity. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are especially encouraged to apply. The Emancipatory Practice award comes with a $250 prize. SKAT welcomes nominations for this award of people who are not currently SKAT (or ASA) members.

Nomination letters should name a person nominated and describe the relevant contribution the nominee has made, specifying how the contribution supports BIPOC communities through SKAT or has implications for public engagement with SKAT knowledge in the spirit of anti-racism. Nomination letters should be no more than 2 single-space pages in length, and if relevant, the nomination letter should include a link to a website, blog, or other social media platform.

Nominations should be emailed to Shannon Malone Gonzalez (sgonzalez@unc.edu), Chair of the Anti-Racism in SKAT Committee. Please include the contact information of the nominator for potential follow-up. Self-nominations are welcome and encouraged. SKAT also welcomes nominations for this award from people who are not currently SKAT (or ASA) members.

2026 Ida B. Wells-Troy Duster Paper Award for Early Career Scholars
Deadline: 3/15/2026

The Science, Knowledge, and Technology (SKAT) Section invites nominations for written scholarship that develops understanding of Black, African American, or Indigenous intersections with science, knowledge, and technology in the spirit of anti-racism. The award honors sociologist Troy Duster (past President of ASA, and mentor to many), and his pathbreaking grandmother Ida B. Wells. Priority will be given to work that, in the tradition of both Wells and Duster, involves pioneering investigation of neglected areas of social injustice. Early career pre-tenure scholars are eligible for this award. This award is open to all persons regardless of identity. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are especially encouraged to apply. Eligible works include work in progress and published articles and chapters of no more than 10,000 words. Published works must have publication dates of no more than two years prior to award year (2024 for the 2026 award). The Wells-Duster Award comes with a $500 prize.

SKAT welcomes nominations (and encourages self-nominations) for this award from people who are not currently SKAT (or ASA) members. The award will come with membership in the SKAT section for one year if the selected recipient is an ASA member. Self-nominations are especially encouraged from students, postdoctoral scholars, and those in contingent or short-term academic positions. Nominees may put forward their work for consideration for this award and for any of the other SKAT awards at the same time.

The nominating statement should (a) briefly describe the written work; (b) summarize how it develops an understanding of Black, African American or Indigenous intersections with SKAT; and (c) explain what makes it a pioneering investigation of a neglected area of social injustice. The statement must also briefly describe the nominee's current position. If the work has multiple authors, specify which author is nominated and highlight the contributions of the nominee to the design, execution, and writing of the work in the nominating statement. Please send nominated work and the brief nominating statement in one PDF document, via email, to Shannon Malone Gonzalez (sgonzalez@unc.edu), Chair of the Anti-Racism in SKAT Committee.

New Books Q&A with Ulises A. Mejias, Co-author of Data Grab

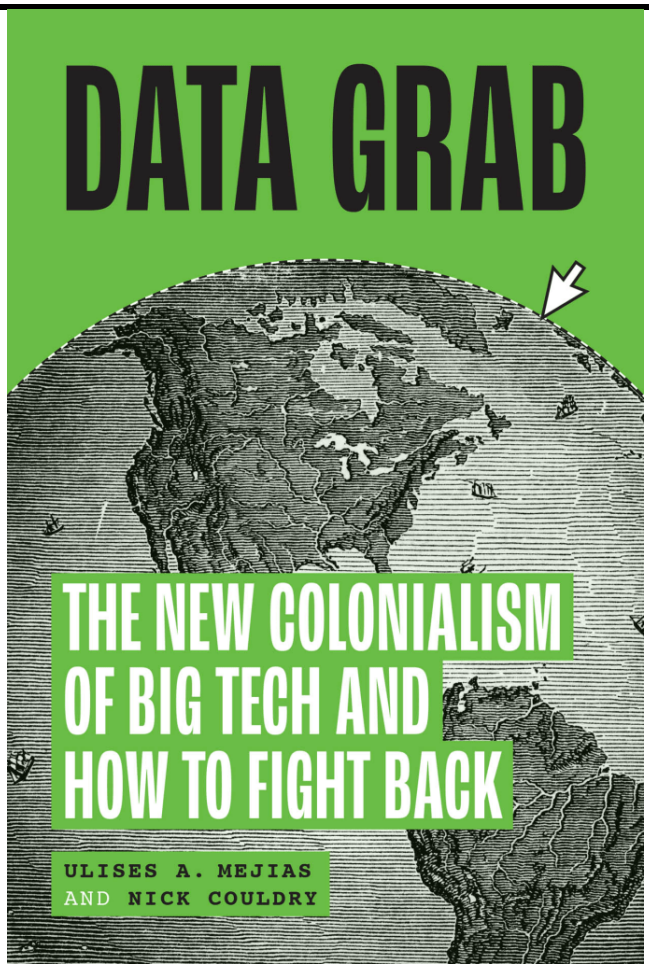
Interviewed by Jeba Humayra Prithwi on October 30, 2025

Ulises A. Mejias is a professor in the Communication Studies department at SUNY Oswego and a recipient of the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship. His research interests include critical data studies, philosophy and sociology of technology, and political economy of digital media. He's on the board of directors of Humanities New York and on the advisory board of the Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law.

Jeba: Thank you for taking the time for this interview. I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Data Grab: The New Colonialism of Big Tech and How to Fight Back*, and it will play an important role in shaping my own research trajectory. To begin, could you share how you first became interested in the core questions you take up in the book? And relatedly, how does this project connect to your earlier work, *The Costs of Connection: How Data Is Colonizing Human Life and Appropriating It for Capitalism*?

Ulises: Thank you for inviting me and for your thoughtful descriptions of my work. I should begin by noting that this is co-authored research I developed with my colleague, Nick Couldry, from the London School of Economics. In terms of where the ideas originated, I'm originally from Mexico, although I've been living in the United States for more than half of my life. But being from the Global South has profoundly shaped my interests and my understanding of colonialism, and the lived experience of it in our day and age.

More specifically, the idea for this project emerged out of a transhistorical comparison of the past and the present. One day I was reading the Requerimiento, which we discuss in our work.



Book Cover (Courtesy of University of Chicago Press)

The Requerimiento was a Spanish document that colonizers would read aloud before conquering a city or village in the so-called New World. The document essentially outlined what they were about to do to the colonized. It said something like: We're going to enter your territory, take possession of it, seize your property; if you resist, we might enslave you and your family, and everything you own now belongs to us. Which is quite an outlandish statement.

But the other interesting thing about it is that it was read in Spanish to populations who did not speak Spanish. As I revisited this document, it suddenly struck me how similar this felt to the experience of reading the terms of use we are asked to accept whenever we install a new app or software. Those terms are also legal documents, written in highly abstract language that is extremely difficult for ordinary users to understand. And yet, by clicking "accept," we are

entering into a binding contract, one that creates a relationship defined by extraction and exploitation.

So, from that, I started to think about the correspondence between the colonial past and the capitalist present. Around that time, I had the good fortune of beginning a collaboration with Nick Couldry. When I shared these early ideas with him, he immediately saw the potential of this framing. Together, we began developing what became our conceptualization of data colonialism, a lens for understanding what is happening with data today.

Our central thesis is that what we are witnessing is a new form of colonialism. It is not about seizing land or natural resources; it is about capturing data, data from our everyday lives, which is extracted and used primarily to generate wealth and profit. This extraction unfolds within deeply unequal relationships that benefit corporations far more than they benefit individuals. And beyond profit, this data is used to establish new forms of social control. States may benefit from it, but so do corporations, whether through enhanced surveillance or new ways of transforming information into wealth and power.

Nick and I wrote an article based on these ideas, and then a book. Our first book on this topic, *The Costs of Connection*, was published in 2019 by Stanford University Press. Afterward, Penguin UK approached us with the idea of adapting the core arguments, originally written as an academic study, for a broader public audience. We were very excited about that opportunity, and that is how *Data Grab* emerged. It's a more accessible version of our earlier work, published by Penguin in the UK, by the University of Chicago Press in the U.S., and by additional presses in Germany, Korea, and elsewhere. In that sense, *Data Grab* is an extension of *The Costs of Connection*, but written with a wider readership in mind.

Jeba: One aspect I really appreciated in *Data Grab* is your argument that what seems like a sudden digital revolution is in fact a continuation of centuries-long patterns of colonial extraction, where violence has become "frictionless." You use the metaphor of two rivers, historic colonialism and data colonialism, now converging, with the new river accelerating the force of the old. Along the way, you develop related concepts such as "data territories" and the "social quantification sector," and you frame data colonialism through the 4X model (Explore, Exploit, Expand, Exterminate). Could you walk us through your process of developing these conceptual tools and explain how they connect to the book's core arguments? And why, in your view, is it important to describe the digital order as *colonialism* rather than simply as *capitalism* or *surveillance*?

Ulises: Certainly, yes. Well, neither Nick nor I are historians of colonialism in a formal academic sense. Nick is a media sociologist. I am a somewhat interdisciplinary scholar working across media and data studies, philosophy of technology, and the political economy of digital media. When we began this project and started to explore the history of colonialism, we had to learn a tremendous amount through that process.

One of the long-standing arguments in post-colonial literature is that you cannot understand capitalism without understanding colonialism. That realization is what led us to the metaphor of the two rivers converging. There is simply no capitalism without colonialism. Very directly, the wealth accumulated through colonial exploitation financed the plantations and the early factories that made industrial capitalism possible. That legacy continues to shape our world today. When we look at racism, or even at the roots of contemporary terrorism, there is always a colonial subtext, patterns established in the past that continue to structure the present.

That has essentially been the core of our project.

Digital Terms and Conditions Interface (Shuttershock)

Tracing these transhistorical continuities and understanding how the past lives on in the present. Many scholars before us have made this point, especially development theorists and postcolonial thinkers who argue that to understand our modern world, we must examine what was inherited from colonialism. Colonialism laid much of the foundation for how we understand capitalism and neoliberalism today.

Our contribution is to extend that analysis to the domain of data. We wanted to follow these continuities across history, which is why we began developing conceptual tools to make sense of the digital present. One of these is the concept of data territories. Historical colonialism relied on acquiring physical territories. Today, territorial acquisition looks different; it is not geographical, but digital. We now have new kinds of territories being acquired, and they play a crucial role in the emerging global order.

If we think about the major platforms we use every day, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, we can think of each as a new kind of data territory. These platforms have boundaries, they have rules, and when we enter them, we are asked to accept a new constitution, so to speak: their terms of service. Unlike historic colonial constitutions that were written on paper, these new constitutions are written in software and code. But the effect is the same; once inside these territories, our actions are governed by the platform's laws and architecture. What we can and cannot do is prescribed by that code.

And once we enter these territories, we are drawn into social relations of extractivism. By agreeing to the platform's rules, we allow the owners of that territory to track us, collect data from us, analyze it, and then use it to determine what content we see, whether advertisements or posts from other users. All of this is made possible by our consent to the rules of these new digital territories.

That's where this concept of data territories comes in. Other scholars have explored similar ideas, but we tried to give the term a very specific definition within the context of data colonialism: these are the new territories, the new zones of extraction and exploitation, where contemporary colonial dynamics unfold.

And, of course, that immediately raises the question: Who owns these territories? This is what led us to develop the idea of the social quantification sector. It's easy to focus only on the Big Tech corporations that dominate these spaces, Google, Meta, Amazon, Apple, and their Chinese counterparts. As we can discuss later, we now live in a kind of bipolar colonial world, where both Silicon Valley and the United States on one side, and Chinese companies and the Chinese Communist Party on the other, play central roles in shaping this emerging order.

But the concept of the social quantification sector allows us to look beyond those major players. It includes not only the corporations whose CEOs we are familiar with, but also the countless smaller companies and government institutions that are embedded in this landscape. These might be hardware manufacturers, software developers, startups fueled by venture capital even before they turn a profit, or the state agencies responsible for regulating, or attempting to regulate, this ecosystem. We wanted an umbrella term that could bring together all of these actors.

At the end of the day, what unites this sector is that everyone involved is engaged in quantifying the social: turning our everyday activities into data that can be analyzed, monetized, and converted into profit. They bring aspects of life that were once outside the economy into the economy through datafication and monetization. That is the logic behind the concept.

Another concept we developed, which we think is important for understanding these dynamics, is the 4X model. We actually borrowed this from the world of video games, specifically, strategy games. In order to succeed in those games, players rely on a 4X approach: explore, expand, exploit and exterminate. If you've played strategy games, you'll recognize how central these actions are to conquering the virtual world. Strategy

video games are very colonial in that sense. You engage in these strategies to conquer the virtual world that you are presented with.

It occurred to us that this model maps almost perfectly onto the playbook of colonialism. Colonizers began by exploring, by "discovering" new worlds. Next came expansion, as they sought to enlarge their territorial control by founding more colonies. They then exploited those worlds by establishing colonies and extraction zones whose wealth could be funneled back to the centers of empire. And finally, they had to exterminate resistance, whether through physical violence or symbolic violence, such as suppressing Indigenous knowledge systems that challenged the colonial worldview.

So the 4X framework mirrors the fundamental steps of colonial expansion, and we found it a useful way of explaining how similar logics operate in the era of data colonialism as well. That was the thinking behind these models and concepts.

Jeba: Moving to methodology, could you describe your methodological approach? And in doing so, did you encounter any particular challenges along the way?

Ulises: Well, yes, that's an interesting question, because in some ways Nick and I were trying to do something that is often met with a certain degree of skepticism today. We were attempting to build a *meta-theory*. In other words, we wanted to develop a framework capable of explaining vast transformations in our social order, transformations driven by very specific technological developments.

As we began this work, we realized that such a framework could help us understand what is happening from a distant, critical vantage point, a perspective that requires some analytical space between ourselves and the phenomena we are studying. And we were comfortable with that approach because we hoped that if the framework proved useful, other scholars would take it up and apply it to particular contexts. They could conduct detailed empirical studies, using

Big Tech Companies (Getty Images)

our model to examine how data colonialism unfolds in different regions and communities.

We were always very aware that there is no single, uniform form of colonialism. Historically, that has never been the case. Colonialism in my native Mexico looked very different from colonialism in India. So, we never wanted to claim that one model explains everything.

What we did argue, however, is that despite these enormous contextual differences, colonial formations share a common historical function: they extract and they dispossess. Regardless of geography or historical moment, the core purpose has always been extraction. Once we identified that continuity, we felt comfortable offering a broad, general framework, while leaving the work of detailed case studies to researchers who are embedded in those specific contexts and best positioned to examine them.

This is a rather long way of saying that, methodologically, we were operating at the level of theory. We were interested in global worldviews. Our approach was broadly theoretical rather than driven by a specific empirical methodology. If we had to name one, critical theory or critical sociology might best describe it, but we were not bound by a tightly defined method.

For that reason, the main challenges we faced were conceptual. We were trying to build a com-

prehensive theoretical framework capable of explaining what we saw happening globally. The difficulty wasn't in applying a specific method to a specific site; it was in crafting a theory broad enough to make sense of these large-scale transformations without erasing local differences.

Jeba: I really appreciated your introduction of the concept of a new "colonial class," the social quantification sector. Could you explain this idea for SKAT readers and discuss why it offers a more precise lens than familiar terms such as "Big Tech" or "surveillance capitalism"?

Ulises: Yes, well, we certainly draw on various ideas and models, including surveillance capitalism, which we find useful. But we also believe that many of these frameworks overlook colonial history in ways that our approach tries to foreground. For us, the core premise is that we cannot understand the present without looking through the lens of the past.

One point I always emphasize is that colonialism was never solely a corporate enterprise or solely a state enterprise. From the very beginning, it was a partnership between the two. The Spanish had institutions such as the Casa de la Contratación de las Indias. Later, in the British Empire, we find clear examples like the East India Company. These were colonial corporations operating under state sanction, backed by state funding, and working in close partnership with imperial administrations.

That historical reality helps us understand where this new "colonial class" comes from. It is easy to focus on the Big Tech corporations, the handful of dominant firms and their CEOs, and to point fingers at them. And we should. But this lens also helps us see the deeper partnerships that make their power possible. Take Elon Musk, for example. He's often portrayed as a lone, "genius entrepreneur," someone who built an empire single-handedly. But his companies have benefited enormously from state contracts and government subsidies that enabled their rise.

We could say the same about Zuckerberg and other prominent figures in today's tech landscape. Their power has grown not only because of their corporate activities but also because of the partnerships they maintain with the U.S. government. These partnerships, I think, are crucial because they allow us to understand the social quantification sector not as purely private or purely public, but as a hybrid formation, a space where corporate and state interests continuously intersect. When we examine the work being done in this sector, China offers a particularly clear example on the Asian side of how tightly the state and private companies can be intertwined.

Thinking about it this way helps us use the concept of the social quantification sector to trace these collaborations and situate them within a broader historical trajectory. It becomes evident that none of this has ever been solely about capitalism, or solely about business, or solely about colonial or imperial interventions. What we see, historically and in the present, is always a combination of state interests and corporate interests working together.

Jeba: You emphasize that the problem is not data itself, which remains essential for science and collective well-being, but the unequal, extractive social order under which it is collected and used. You also stress that resistance must be both imaginative and practical, rooted in Indigenous, feminist, and community-led frameworks. At the same time, you warn that perhaps the deepest danger of data colonialism is not only the erosion of autonomy but the loss of even imagining freedom itself. You write that "we cannot build resistance without solidarity, but that means being clear from the start about how we have individually contributed to this system in various ways" (p. 208). Could you elaborate on what it means to "decolonize data" in practice?

Ulises: In our work we try to be very clear that we are not "anti-data." We are not claiming that data itself is bad. Our definition of data colonialism is very specific. It describes a social order in which

data is extracted from our everyday lives for the purpose of generating wealth in ways that deepen inequality and enable new forms of social control. It is when data is used in these extractivist ways, to enrich some while constraining others, that we see a serious problem.

Another important point is that when we look at the history of colonialism, we have to remember that it was never *only* about conquering land or seizing natural resources. Colonialism also aimed to conquer the minds of the colonized, to make a Eurocentric, white, male worldview appear as the only rational way to understand and reorganize the world socially and economically. Doing that required suppressing or erasing other forms of knowledge: Indigenous knowledge systems, knowledge produced by women, by people of color, and by communities whose epistemologies challenged the colonial worldview.

That is the history of colonialism, and we continue to see its imprint today in data colonialism. Data colonialism involves all of us to some degree, but our argument is that its costs fall disproportionately on the same groups who have historically borne the brunt of colonialism, people of color, women, the poor, and communities in the Global South. Data colonialism is not a new form of colonialism emerging on a blank slate. It is built on centuries of discrimination, bias, and oppression that continue to structure social life.

When we look, for instance, at what's happening in the gig economy, many gig workers in the Global North are migrant workers. People often enter gig work because they cannot access formal employment. Once they enter these data territories, their wages can be algorithmically depressed, now increasingly through AI systems. They can be pushed into precarious, exploitative forms of employment with little protection. So again, we see marginalized populations paying a disproportionately high price for the new data order.

Which brings us to the question of resistance. Here, we draw inspiration from activists in Latin America who have shown us for many decades that to decolonize our conditions, we need to operate at three different levels. We need to fight within the system, the colonial and capitalist system that we inhabit. We need to fight against it. And also, we need to fight beyond it.

And so, within the system, we need to participate in mainstream politics, as frustrating as that can be today. We have to keep putting pressure on governments and elected officials to develop solutions that serve us, the people who voted for them, rather than primarily serving corporations, the people who fund them. That is what it means to fight *within* the system.

We are also seeing important forms of dissent emerging inside corporations, people working in big tech, people working across the social quantification sector, who are saying, "I'm not comfortable with this project my company is pursuing." These acts of internal resistance matter. They are part of the struggle within the system.

But, of course, the system is not going to reform itself on its own. We also have to fight against it, which includes all forms of political protest and collective action. The history of decolonial and postcolonial movements provides us with a rich archive of strategies for resistance, resisting with the body when possible, and resisting with the mind, with culture, with imagination when physical resistance is impossible or too dangerous.

That brings us to the third level, fighting beyond the system. This means imagining and building new kinds of technologies, new ways of being in the world, new realities that are not shaped by the structures that currently oppress us. It requires creativity, experimentation, and a willingness to envision possibilities that do not yet exist. To be effective, resistance must work across all three levels. Focusing on just one will never be enough. Engaging in protest while ignoring mainstream politics won't get us far, and participating in politics without imagining alternatives also falls short. So decolonizing data, ultimately, means finding ways for data not to be extractive. And achieving that requires coordinated work within, against, and beyond the system.

Jeba: Before we conclude, is there anything else you would like to emphasize, key insights, reflections, or hopes that you would like readers to take away from the book?

Ulises: I would just add that one thing that has been surprising is the way this work has been received. Overall, the reception has been positive, but it often takes different forms in the Global South and the Global North. In the Global North, even when people appreciate the importance of understanding these dynamics historically, there is often a strong desire for practical steps, a kind of "tell me what to do." The reaction is sometimes: "This is depressing. You're telling me that what we're facing is part of a 500-year history of oppression, so what are the concrete actions I can take? Can you give me a simple list?" And we often have to remind audiences that there aren't always quick solutions, and certainly not ones that come in easy-to-follow steps.

I think audiences in the Global South tend to be more willing to recognize that, yes, this is an enormous and deeply serious problem, and that we may not be able to solve it immediately. There may not be "five easy steps" for dismantling data colonialism. But that understanding is part of our lived reality, and part of the long history of colonialism itself. Resistance has always been slow, often frustrating, but also enriching and dignifying in ways that matter deeply to us in the Global South.

In other words, we may not be able to end colonialism tomorrow or even next year. But we can find ways to survive with dignity in the short term while we work toward long-term solutions, solutions that will require patience, sustained labor, and, unfortunately, in many cases, risk. Sometimes that risk involves jeopardizing livelihoods. In the worst cases, it can mean risking lives. But this has always been part of the struggle for justice in contexts shaped by centuries of dispossession.

And given what is happening in the world today, I think it has become increasingly clear that certain populations continue to be persecuted more severely than others. This makes it all the more urgent for us to build new forms of solidarity and new forms of resistance. We need collective ways of confronting the rising influence of the far right and the resurgence of fascism that we are witnessing across many regions today.

Jeba: Thank you very much for your work and for taking the time to speak with me today. I especially appreciated how you conclude with the vision of "a world in which many worlds fit" (p. 221), drawn from the Zapatistas' land resistance movement in Chiapas 30 years ago, and the reminder that "as human beings, we have the capacity to name the world, rather than have it named for us" (p. 241). To conclude, may I ask what you are currently working on, and whether there are any upcoming projects that SKAT readers might look forward to

Ulises: At the moment, I'm co-editing a handbook on critical data studies, which is taking up most of my time. I'm working on it with two wonderful colleagues, Jasmine McNealy and Milagros Miceli. Nick is also working on new projects; he has a new book (*The Space of the World: Can Human Solidarity Survive Social Media and What If It Can't?*) and is working on a new one on AI.

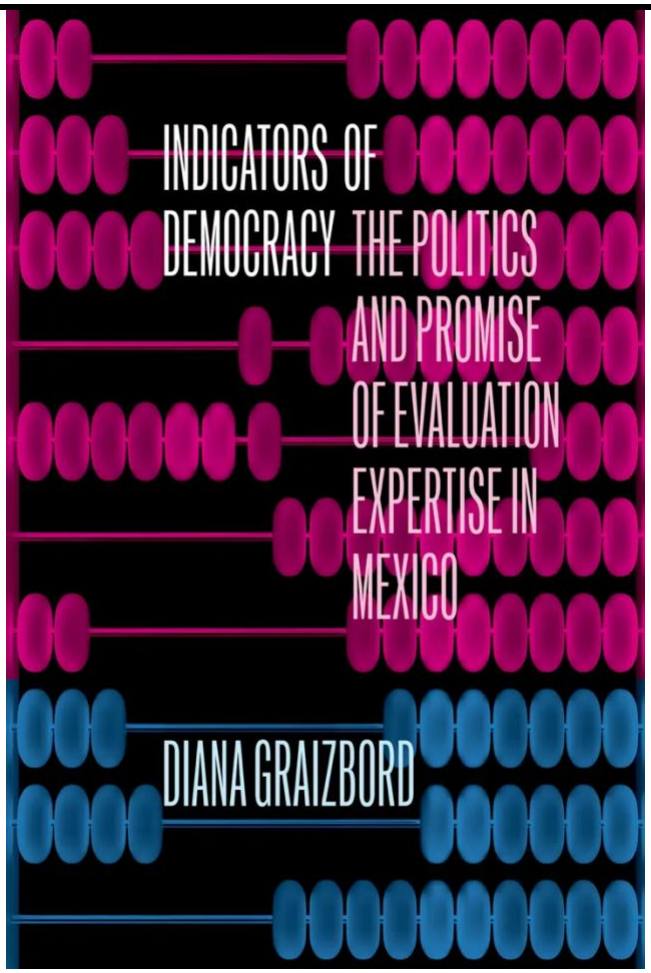
But much of our energy these days is going into building and supporting a network that Nick and I started with our colleague from Mexico, Paola Ricarte, a network called Tierra Común. We've created a space primarily for scholar-activists and educators from Latin America, though we also have members from other parts of the world. We see this as an essential project, a way of fostering solidarity among people thinking critically about data colonialism.

One of the unfortunate consequences of the colonial legacy is that connections between the Global South and the Global North are often easier to establish than connections among scholars within the Global South itself. Tierra Común aims to address that imbalance by strengthening ties among researchers in the Global South, especially across Latin America. And we're very excited about the work our colleagues there are developing.

New Books Q&A with Diana Graizbord, Author of *Indicators of Democracy*

Interviewed by Jorge Ochoa on November 25, 2025

Diana Graizbord is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Georgia. Her first book, Indicators of Democracy: The Politics and Promise of Evaluation Expertise in Mexico, was published by Stanford University Press in 2024. Graizbord is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame for the 2025-2026 academic year and previously was a Member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.



Book Cover (Courtesy of Stanford University Press)

Jorge: Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. To begin with, I would love to hear how you came to be interested in studying the world of monitoring and evaluation? And the case of Mexico's Council for the Evaluation of Social Policy (CONEVAL) in particular?

Diana: Thank you so much for having me and for taking the time to read the book, engage it, and engage me in this conversation. I really appreciate it. This is one of the questions I love because I think big research projects often have an autobiographical element. Certainly first book projects tend to have an autobiographical element. Mine has two starting points. One of them is really autobiographical: Before I started my PhD in sociology, I was working in the field of monitoring and evaluation. I was a participant in the production of the kind of expertise that I ended up studying during the PhD and for the book. I came to work in monitoring and evaluation sort of by accident, because I was interested in international development, poverty, inequality, and related questions. But the field of monitoring and evaluation, at least in its overlap with international development, was booming and like many early career people I was channeled towards monitoring and evaluation.

At the same time, I was working towards a master's degree in International Affairs at the New School. And as a Mexican and as someone interested in poverty and inequality in Mexico, I was studying the case of *Progresa/ Oportunidades*, the famous conditional cash transfer program that, in part, became famous and a gold standard for poverty intervention because of its evaluations. It was one of the pioneer conditional cash transfer programs, but also a pioneer in using randomized control trials—what has become the gold standard for evaluation, with Nobel Prizes awarded around this particular technique for evaluation.
I started my PhD thinking that I would go back to working in the international development, poverty space and discovered, as one should during early

graduate school, that I could also take that field as my object. Rather than being a participant in the world of monitoring and evaluation, I could take monitoring and evaluation as an object of sociological analysis. The intellectual starting point for this project was both critical development studies—anthropological and sociological work on the development enterprise and the institutions and organizations that promote that—and science and technology studies, my encounter with the idea that I could take expertise, including the particular kind of expertise that I had been a producer of, as an object of study.

So I came to this project both biographically, because I was participating in that world, and then also because I wanted to understand how it was that this policy, *Progresa/Oportunidade*s, the conditional cash transfer program, had become a global model. What could explain its success despite the chronic and persistent poverty in Mexico? The answer that I arrived at, and that others arrived at as well, was that its success had to do with the kinds of expertise mobilized around it.

Jorge: It's a great convergence of historical developments and your own background. A key concept in your book is technodemocracy. Could you explain what you mean by technodemocracy, including its difference from the idea of technocracy, and also how it relates to Mexico's struggle for democratization?

Diana: I think of technodemocracy as a techno-political imaginary and related set of practices. Here I'm following Charles Taylor and others, and in STS, Sheila Jasanoff and others. There're two ways of tracing the concept of imaginaries—one more philosophical and one more in STS. I think about technopolitical imaginaries as ways of thinking about the power and potential of technologies in bringing about political projects. That's kind of the Sheila Jasanoff way of thinking of it. In the particular context I study, technodemocracy names how a set of techniques, monitoring and evaluation, are ascribed political potential. The political potential and promise attached to monitoring and evaluation, in the context in which I studied it, was democratic. There are two parts to the concept. The "techno" or the "technical" in the concept refers to the techniques of monitoring and evaluation. The "democratic" refers to how those techniques get embedded in a democratic political project and assigned a series of democratic capacities or potentialities. Those democratic capacities are also worth defining, because we can think of democracy in many ways. As I write in the book, the democratic ideal to which technodemocrats aspire builds on ideas of democratic "consolidation" and a "transition" to democracy framework that has dominated discourse and political practice in Mexico. This has to do with a consolidation of liberal institutions, an expansion of rights, a deepening of democracy, and especially with transparency and accountability.

How does it differ from neighboring concepts like technocracy? Here I was really thinking with and against the literature on technocrats and technocracy in Latin America. Lots of what we know about technocrats comes from the Mexican context. There are so many important studies of how technocrats do their work, their relationship to democracy, the colonization of the state by economists that focus on the Mexican case, and the Chilean as well. Studies of Mexico by Miguel Centeno and others detailed the technocratization of the Mexican state in the 1970s, 1980s, and into the 1990s. I began my research with this image of the state and technocracy provided by that earlier generation,

CONEVAL Headquarters (Agencia Amexi)

and I was trying to make sense of that against what I was seeing ethnographically. I build on that scholarship, and I'm so grateful for it. But it really was focused on how economic styles of thought moved into other fields—an economization of policy, including social policy and poverty—coeval with the neoliberalization of the Mexican state, which prioritized the accountancy and efficiency standards that we think of as part and parcel of neoliberalization. But what I was seeing was different. The technodemocrats I write about inherited some styles of thought and methods. They prioritized efficiency and had a penchant for quantification. But they were also serious about their own commitments to democracy, rights, participation, and about opening up spaces for transparency. That was qualitatively different. There was a democratic aspiration which melded with the trust in their own expertise as a way to bring those aspirations to fruition. I see that as qualitatively different. These technodemocrats also occupied a different space within the state. If we think about technocrats in the Mexican case as initially operating at the highest level and coordinating a kind of old, entrenched bureaucracy downwards, the folks that I write about, some of them are at the top, but a lot of them were mid-level analysts and bureaucrats, running the backstage, infrastructural aspects of the state. In the book I detail the democratic imaginary attached to the technical aspects of policy evaluation and also the placement—where the technical experts are within the state, and the professional and academic trajectories that they had to get there.

Jorge: Your conceptual work highlights both the continuity and change in nice ways. I also appreciated your ethnographic attention to feelings of civic duty, responsibility, hopes, desires, normative expectations and the like. What do we learn about the politics of evaluation when we zero in on these dimensions, the realm of subjectivity?

Diana: This is such a good question, and I don't think it's as developed in the book as I'd like. This is an aside, but after publishing the book, right now for a new project, I'm engaging with the sociology of morality. It's really helping me think back to some of the moral and affective frameworks that I touched upon but did not develop so much in the book. The feelings among those I worked with and their commitments to doing good and doing the work of democracy were palpable, and they were real, right? It was not just discursive justifications of their work. These were folks that had left—some of them, young people—that had left lucrative careers in banks and finance to come and work in the CONEVAL, a state institution, because they thought that the work that they were doing there was good work, work that was contributing to the democratic politics that they cared about. A sense of civic duty was not just a discursive justification or moral framework attached to the work after the fact. It was motivating and had material consequences for folks. That's part of it. The other part is—and I talk a little bit about this with Luciana de Souza Leão in our Politics & Society piece—the cultural work of the state. Even going back to Weber, we know that states are also made up of feelings and motivations, people muddling through and being anxious about both their own personal projects and the politics that they care about, and that's just true. We know that about bureaucracy, and we know that about technocrats. And if you do ethnographic work, it becomes very palpable. One of the reasons why it took me so long to write the book, I think, was because I ended up really liking the people that I worked with and felt a commitment to both expressing the critiques I had and the admiration I had for their hard work and their political commitments, even while criticizing them from my cushy place in my office.

There's a kind of theoretical question here about how we think about the state and policy and its cultural dimensions. But there's also an ethnographic dimension which is, you can't help but write about duties, hopes, and desires if you do ethnographic work because people will share their anxieties and aspirations. They tell you about how little money they make and how stressed they are and how much money they used to make, and that they took the cut because they care.

Jorge: I found the normative dimensions super fascinating. One of my favorite parts is chapter 5, "Engaging Risky and Replicating Publics," where you discuss the relationship between publics and state expertise. How are the two groups you identify

—specialized civic society actors, on the one hand, and beneficiaries, on the other—differently situated within Mexico's enterprise of monitoring and evaluation of social policy?

Diana: I want to give credit where credit is due. This chapter really builds on other people's work, including the two concepts that you just mentioned. I found the work of Monika Krause on the social history of the beneficiary super helpful, even though she's talking about a different context and a different historical moment. On the question of specialized civil society, this is a concept that is used in practice in Mexican politics, especially in the context of consulting with civil society. It's one that Analiese Richard, an anthropologist at the UAM in Mexico, introduced me to. She'd written a piece about it, which was clarifying for me. So that's important to say.

This chapter you ask about goes back again to the technodemocratic imaginary. One of the normative commitments that at least those working within the CONEVAL had—because these sometimes clash with some of the projects pursued by other state actors or academics they must work with—was to make monitoring and evaluation useful: useful for, among other things, holding the state accountable and rights claiming. These are things that we think are important for democratizing the state, and they wanted monitoring and evaluation to serve as a currency in the relationship between citizens and the state, a tool citizens could use to make claims to the state about rights and then holding the state accountable for responding. But one of the tensions they grappled with and were aware of is that these claims-making ordinary citizens never figured in monitoring and evaluation. Their civil society partners, their actual citizen interlocutors, were specialized elites and technocratic actors within civil society. These were the folks that were appreciative of monitoring and evaluation, that participated in the making of it, and that were deemed equipped with the expertise necessary to put monitoring and evaluation to use. The so-called ordinary citizen was absent from both the production and circulation of monitoring and evaluation. So instead of this ordinary citizen, I write about two stand-ins. One is specialized civil society. These are think tanks, organized NGOs that are producing reports about what the state is doing in various policy realms. These are data journalists, people like that. And then, on the other hand, we have beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are the recipients of social policy; they are key for evaluation. Beneficiaries are the ones whose behaviors are being monitored and measured, whose incomes are being calculated, and whose schooling years are being quantified as evidence of whether the state is doing or not doing what it's supposed to. And because of this beneficiaries, as recipients of social programs, come into monitoring and evaluation as providers of data, as data inputs into the process of producing monitoring and evaluation—but ones that are both necessary and risky. One of the things that evaluation experts I write about have not been able to shake from previous generations, is a paternalistic distrust of the poor. So they are like, "Evaluation is important because we are giving voice to beneficiaries. We produce monitoring and evaluation as an input into their rights claims. Etcetera." But also, "They lie to us. They tell us they don't have TVs when they do have TVs. They lie about how much income they have. They say they're going to the clinic for checkups when they don't. Etcetera." There is a kind of double-sided anxiety, anxiety about producing something useful for them, and on the other side like, "We need to talk to them, we need to measure them. But they lie to us and they're untrustworthy."

Jorge: The program itself is trying to intervene in stratification, ultimately, but at the same time is reinforcing a stratified public.

Diana: And it's super interesting, some of the ethnographic descriptions I provide are of meetings in which people say, "This is giving voice." But then they're also like, "Oh, remember that paper?" There's this academic paper written by two economists that circulates that stands in as evidence that poor people are always lying to evaluators about how much they have or don't have. And they take that paper really seriously. It's like a proof of concept, that they have to be careful, that we can't just interview beneficiaries. We have to find data to stand in for the beneficiaries, because if you interview them, they'll

lie to us. In contrast, specialized civil society stands in as empowered interlocutors in the expert field of monitoring and evaluation. And there is no "ordinary citizen."

Jorge: In the conclusion, you write that technodemocracy is tenuous yet tenacious in character. Could you share what you mean by this, including in light of the dissolution of CONEVAL in late 2024?

Diana: I have been grappling with this question myself. What I meant by tenuous and tenacious in the book is that monitoring and evaluation as wrapped up in a technodemocratic imaginary—an imaginary about the prospects and paths of the democratic consolidation project—really had a hold, and really continues, actually, to have a hold on many of the same people that are now lamenting the end of the democratic transition. As part of the so-called democratic consolidation process monitoring and evaluation had and continues to have a hold. Technodemocracy is expressed in a belief in holding the state accountable through techniques of quantification and external, trustworthy evidence as tools for improving state function, state performance, and moving the state towards more democratic goals, whether goals of transparency or goals of rights and redistribution. I think that that's still alive and well, and we saw it in the responses to the threats on CONEVAL over a number of years and then its final closure. Those responses came from specialized civil society that we've just been talking about, think tanks, journalists, and elite academics who had worked with CONEVAL for years and believed in the project. That's what I mean by a tenacious hold: this aspiration that a set of techniques and tools are and should be an input into a more democratic future. This continues to hold.

But the agency and the work they did was always tenuous in the sense that it was institutionally precarious. Unlike other cases, like what Luciana de Souza Leão describes in the case of Brazil, or other Latin American cases where monitoring and evaluation hasn't been institutionalized within the state, Mexico did institutionalize monitoring and evaluation, giving it a kind of importance. Yet, the institutionalization was partial: programs had to be evaluated but evaluation findings were never legally binding. CONEVAL was an autonomous organization that did not, like some of its peers, benefit from being constitutionally autonomous. The normative legal infrastructure that might have protected CONEVAL was left undone. Even though monitoring and evaluation had this important role in politics, it was tenuous in the sense that there were always threats of ignoring or shutting down the enterprise. Part of the work of monitoring and evaluation experts in Mexico was always the work of convincing, selling their product, teaching others to do it, and distributing the expertise because of the precarity of their work. So that's what I meant. In light of the current moment, I think maybe I overestimated the tenacity. Now CONEVAL has been dissolved, but the belief in the political potential of monitoring and evaluation remains, and is evident in the nostalgia for it, in the lamenting of its disappearance, and in the work of academics and civil society actors who are now taking up the work. In the aftermath of CONEVAL, some of the actors that I write about in the book have formed a coalition of universities and specialized civil society to take up the work of monitoring and evaluation in the absence of its institutional home within the state. This coalition also talks about democracy and about holding what they consider to be an autocratic regime accountable, re-democratizing. But it's worth developing the question further at this moment. I feel like the book needs a coda.

Jorge: The core of it seems to be that the imaginary can outlive the institution, and that gives it some resiliency.

Diana: So now the actual task is being taken up by others, and they're not going to have the same footholds within the state, and it's going to be different. Yet monitoring and evaluation remains—now from outside of the federal bureaucracy—as a potential antidote to non-democratic practices of Morena, the current hegemonic party and regime.

Jorge: My final question, which you started to talk a bit about earlier, is what are you working on next? Any exciting projects you'd like to preview for the SKAT newsletter readership?

Diana: An interesting outcome of my relationship with CONEVAL is that I ended up doing an evaluation of a social program called *Sembrando Vida*. I'm writing a couple of papers using the data from that evaluation which are about how poverty bureaucrats working during the Andrés Manuel López Obrador administration implemented programs and got things done, in the context of austerity and in the absence of some of the accumulated technical, informational, and administrative capacities that the state had developed in a previous era. There's lots of talk about how the current regime—AMLO and his successor, Claudia Sheinbaum—is hollowing out particular agencies and forging an attack on expertise, including CONEVAL. The project I'm working on seeks to understand how that is being negotiated on the ground, how program implementation and the work of frontline, street-level bureaucrats has been reshaped in the context of a political project that is pro-poor but which has dismantled the very capacities we think of as necessary for delivering. A paper I'm writing now tries to argue that in the absence of administrative capacities, a shared moral economy and justifications can come to fill the gap and become key to the state getting stuff done. Sociologists tend to think that administrative and technical capacities are necessary for program implementation. While that's true, the program I'm writing about, *Sembrando Vida*, shows us that bureaucrats get things done because they believe in the project. They sacrifice, and they do the work. They deliver. They deliver to the poor despite the difficulties.

And then the other thing, a long-term project that I'm thinking about, has to do with state ignorance. We know a lot about state seeing and state knowing, but I'm interested in exploring the dynamics of ignorance and blindness of the state in the Mexican context.

Jorge: That's great. They both sound really fascinating. I look forward to following your work. Thank you again for taking the time for this interview.

Recent Publications from Section Members

New Articles

Adetiba, Elizabeth, and Adam Reich. 2025. "The Science of Blackness: Biology and Social Science in Black-Focused Scholarship, 1900–2020." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* doi:10.1177/23326492251384914.

Alenichev, Arsenii, Jonathan D. Shaffer, Patricia Kingori, Koen Peeters Grietens, James Muldoon, and Luc Rocher. 2025. "'We Can See a Savage': A Case Study of the Colonial Gaze in Generative AI Algorithms." *AI & SOCIETY*. doi:10.1007/s00146-025-02685-0.

Alex, Heba. 2025. "Fuzzy Boundaries: A Mechanism for Group Accumulation of Advantage." *Sociological Theory*. doi:10.1177/07352751251378516.

Birch, Kean. 2025. "Do Artifacts Have Political Economy?" *Science, Technology, & Human Values*. doi:10.1177/01622439251352167.

Budhu, Joshua A., Cleopatra Elshiekh, William L. Schpero, Yasin Civelek, Larry Au, and Francesca M. Gany. 2025. "Emergency Medicaid at Risk — Preserving State Authority and Access to Care." *New England Journal of Medicine* 393(14):1356–58. doi:10.1056/NEJMp2508944.

Carter, Samuel O., and John G. Dale. 2025. "Social Bias in AI: Re-Coding Innovation through Algorithmic Political Capitalism." *AI & SOCIETY*. doi:10.1007/s00146-025-02540-2.

da Silva, Renan Gonçalves Leonel, Amanda Curi, Larry Au, Cristian Capotescu, and Gil Eyal. 2025. "Contested Illness and Alternative Expertise Networks in Global Health: Post-COVID Syndrome in Brazil." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 47(7):e70079. doi:10.1111/1467-9566.70079.

Fisher, Jill A., Yu Tao, Margaret Waltz, and Torin Monahan. 2025. "Leaving Academia: Dual-Career Relationships and Partners' Attrition from Academic Careers." *Women's Health Reports* 6(1): 752-762. doi:10.1177/26884844251366373.

Foti, Nicole. 2025. "The Open Pharma Movement: Social Action to 'Open' Drug Research and Its Implications for Health." *Social Studies of Science*. doi:10.1177/03063127251386079.

Hanley, Margot, and Hannah Wohl. 2025. "Producing Shifting Personhood: How Designers Anthropomorphize Artificial Intelligence." *Big Data & Society* 12(4):20539517251392067. doi:10.1177/20539517251392067.

Kotliar, Dan M. 2025. "Can't Stop the Hype: Scrutinizing AI's Realities." *Information, Communication & Society*. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2025.2531165

Kramer, Brandon L., and Catherine Lee. 2025. "The Rise of Diversity Terminology in Biomedical Research." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 122(34):e2401805122. doi:10.1073/pnas.2401805122.

Larregue, Julien, and Séverine Louvel. 2025. "From Neighborhoods to Molecules: The Selective Appropriation of Sociology in Social Epigenetics." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*. doi:10.1177/01622439251378192.

Markens, Susan, and Marzena Woinska. 2025. "At the Front Stage: Uncertainty as a Medical Work Object." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior.*. doi:10.1177/00221465251349827.

Monahan, Torin. 2025. "Silencing Dissent: Surveillance and Police Actions on University Campuses during Pro-Palestinian Protests." *Surveillance & Society* 23(3):303–20. doi:10.24908/ss.v23i3.18466.

Newton, Tim. 2025. "What Is Social Science? A Comparison with Biology." *Sociological Theory* 43(3):238–63. doi:10.1177/07352751251353197.

Ricucci, Rachel, and Grant Blank. 2025. "The Limits of Platforms: Why Disintermediation Has Failed in the Art Market." *New Media & Society*. doi:10.1177/14614448251316498.

Smith, Thomas M., and Jeffrey W. Lockhart. 2025. "'This Work Would Not Have Been Possible without . . .': The Length of Acknowledgments in Sociology Books." *Socius*. doi:10.1177/23780231251378803.

Zhang, Qiantao, Mary Frank Fox, Shiri M. Breznitz, and Talia Capozzoli Kessler. 2025. "Analyzing the Impact of Gender on Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Evidence from University Graduates." *The Journal of Technology Transfer* 50(3):1080–1110. doi:10.1007/s10961-024-10128-z.

New Special Issue

Claire Decoteau and Paige Sweet co-edited a special issue on "Stratified Medicalization" in *Social Science & Medicine*. Congratulations to the co-editors and all contributing authors. The special collection is available here and includes the following articles:

Decoteau, Claire Laurier, and Paige L. Sweet. 2025. "Extending Biomedicalization, Complicating Stratification." *Social Science & Medicine* 384:118569. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118569.

Decoteau, Claire Laurier, Cal Lee Garrett, and Tirza Ochrach-Konradi. 2025. "Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis." *Social Science & Medicine* 377:118086. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118086.

Fisher, Jill A. 2025. "Pursuing a 'Normal' Life of Food: Families' Experiences of Pediatric Food Allergy Clinical Trials." *Social Science & Medicine* 378:118085. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118085.

Gonsalves, Tara. 2025. "Aging Bodies, Future Technologies: Health Insurance Coverage and Stratified Biomedicalization." *Social Science & Medicine* 383:118348. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118348.

Jackson, Ni'Shele. 2025. "Saying No to Weight-Loss Drugs: The Paradox of the Ideal Patient-Consumer and Stratified Biomedicalization." *Social Science & Medicine* 384:118429. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118429.

Mayes, E. Carolina. 2025. "'We Know What to Do for You, but We Can't Do It:' How Actionability Is Coordinated and Contested in Genomics Research." *Social Science & Medicine* 376:118088. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118088.

McCabe, Katharine. 2025. "The Racialized Logics of Clinical Policing of Pregnant Bodies in the United States." *Social Science & Medicine* 382:118353. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118353.

Molina, Santiago J., and Melissa Creary. 2025. "The Racial Politics of Visibility and Equity in Genome-Editing Therapies for Sickle Cell Disease." *Social Science & Medicine* 383:118452. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118452.

Piehowski, Victoria. 2025. "Medicalizing Violence: The Institutional Politics of Trauma in Veterans Treatment Courts." *Social Science & Medicine* 380:118170. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118170.

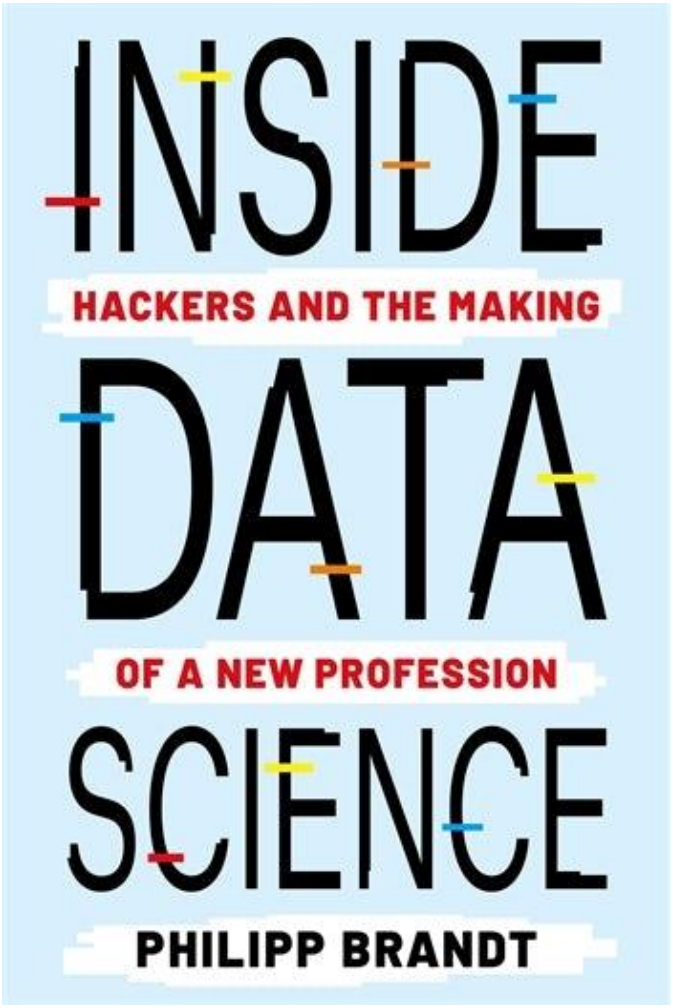
Pryma, Jane. 2025. "Trauma as a Workaround: Recognizing Chronic Pain as Disability Without Medical Documentation in the United States and France." *Social Science & Medicine* 382:118364. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118364.

Vasquez, Emily. 2025. "Prediabetes in Practice: Examining the Stratified Medicalization of Diabetes Prevention." *Social Science & Medicine* 384:118513. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118513.

Shim, Janet K., and Laura Mamo. 2026. "Advancing Stratified Biomedicalization for Urgent Times." *Social Science & Medicine* 388:118669. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118669.

New Books

Brandt, Philipp. 2025. *Inside Data Science: Hackers and the Making of a New Profession*. Columbia University Press. https://cup.columbia.edu/book/inside-data-science/9780231214094/



Book Cover (from CUP)

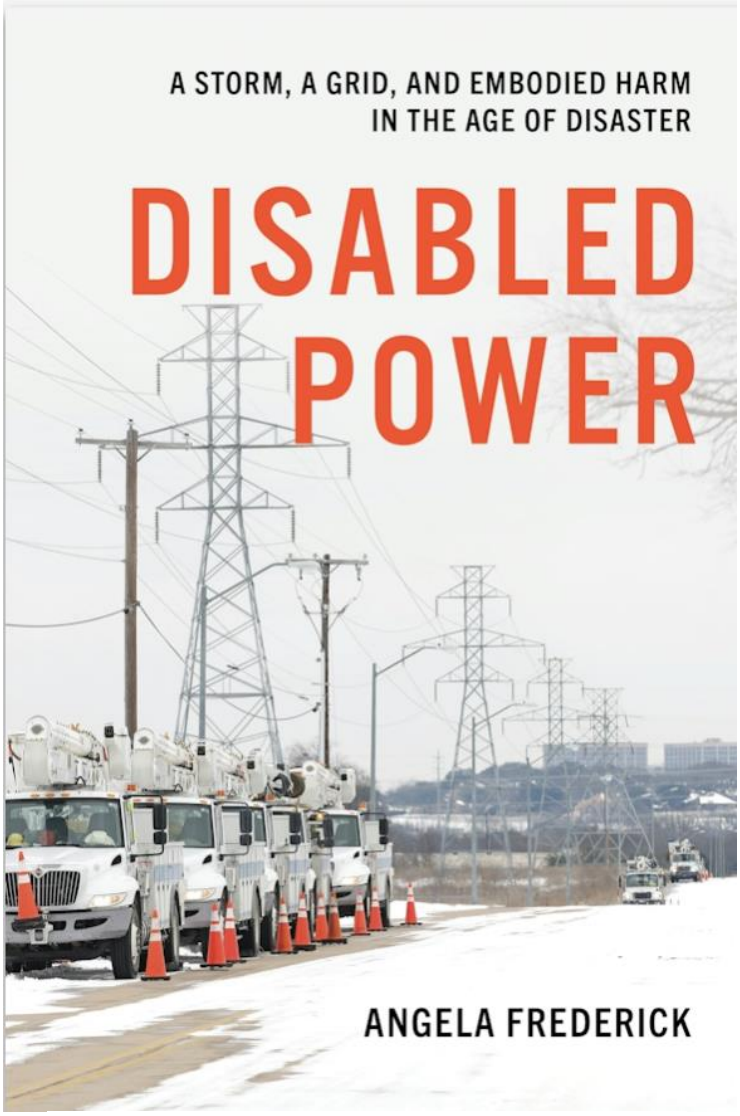
"Data scientists appeared suddenly in the early 2010s and quickly became ubiquitous. Institutions, from established corporations to start-ups, universities to government agencies, scrambled to recruit specialists. Somehow, a loose band of computer experts and hackers integrated established technologies and methodologies—and some questionable ideas—into a distinct profession. Where did data science come from, and why did it gain broad recognition?

Inside Data Science examines how data scientists defined their professional role and identity, offering an empirically rich and theoretically grounded account of the emergence of a new field. Philipp Brandt met data science's early protagonists in New York City's start-up spaces, coffee shops, and lecture halls, where they displayed a puzzling combination of enthusiasm and uncertainty. At these seemingly casual gatherings, data scientists devised the machinery for seeing the world through datasets while also analyzing the social context of their technical work. Retracing their conversations, Brandt demonstrates how the data scientist role emerged from the collective processing of personal struggles navigating the uncharted space between statistical expertise and coding skills. Offering a novel analytical lens and critical perspective on data science, this book shows how the interplay of personal reflection, technical rigor, and collective scrutiny gave the big-data era, for better or for worse, a human face."

Philipp Brandt is an assistant professor of sociology at Sciences Po Paris and a researcher at the Centre for the Sociology of Organizations.

Frederick, Angela. 2025. Disabled Power: A Storm, A Grid, and Embodied Harm in the Age of Disaster. NYU Press. https://nyupress.org/9781479828142/disabled-power/

"Every disaster is a disability disaster, argues Angela Frederick. *Disabled Power* tells the stories of Texans with disabilities who endured the 2021 Texas power crisis, which forced millions of Texas residents to endure a dayslong winter storm without heat or water. Based on 58 in-depth interviews with disabled Texans and parents of disabled children, Frederick highlights how disabled people and those with chronic health conditions are uniquely harmed when basic infrastructure such as power and water systems fail. She argues that the vulnerability people with disabilities experienced during this disaster was not an inevitable consequence of individual disabled bodies. Rather, disability vulnerability was "produced" by policies that "disabled" vital infrastructure.



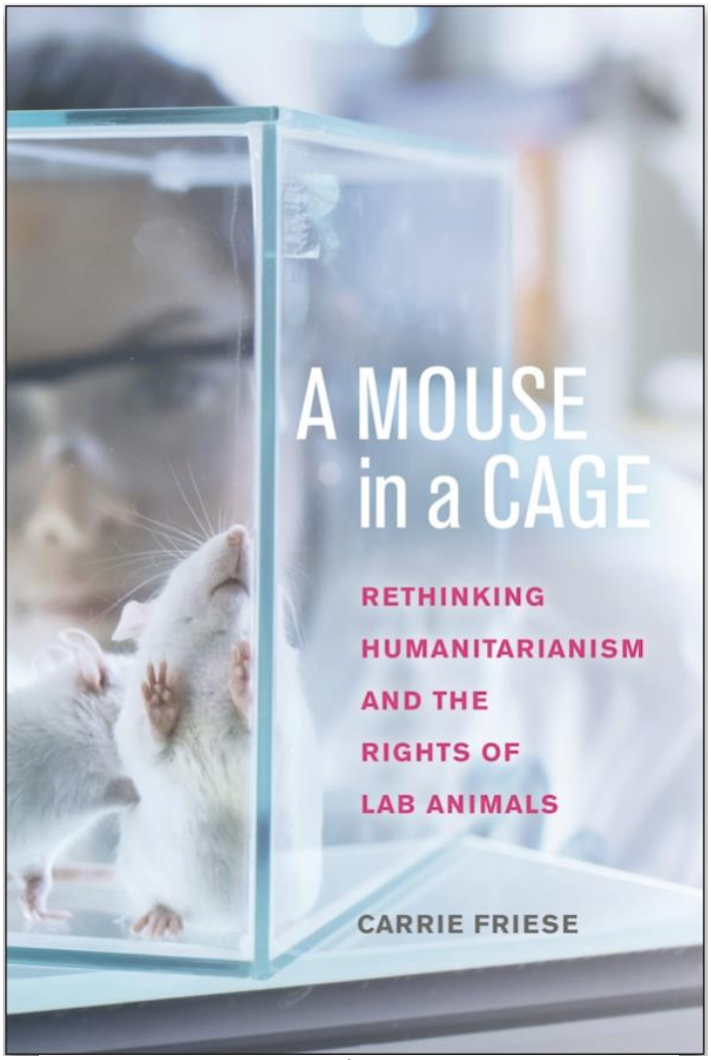
Book Cover (from NYU Press)

Frederick also emphasizes another meaning of the phrase "disabled power:" the individual and collective resilience and creativity Texans with disabilities exercised to survive the disaster. Despite common perceptions of people with disabilities as passive victims, Frederick shows how many found strategies to survive and to provide and receive care within their communities. Ultimately, the implications of this disaster extend far beyond Texas and underscore our increased vulnerability to infrastructural failures as extreme weather events become more common. *Disabled Power* offers a blueprint for reimagining vulnerability and resilience to center people with disabilities in disaster research and emergency response."

Angela Frederick is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Freise, Carrie. 2025. *A Mouse in a Cage: Rethinking Humanitarianism and the Rights of Lab Animals*. NYU Press. https://nyupress.org/9781479833481/a-mouse-in-a-cage/

"Laboratory animals are often used to develop medical treatments: vaccines, antibiotics, and organ transplants have all relied upon animal testing to ensure safety and success for human benefit. Yet the relationship between the scientific community's dependence on laboratory animals and the recognition of the need to treat these animals with respect and compassion has given rise to a profound tension. As animals are increasingly understood to have rights and autonomy, Carrie Friese posits that, while care and compassion for a distant other who suffers are central to humanitarianism, the idea of a distant other itself, which has shaped work with laboratory animals both historically and today, has enacted forms of highly problematic paternalism, creating a double bind. Focusing on the lives of laboratory mice and rats in the United Kingdom, and on the people who take care of, and often kill, these animals, Friese gives the name of "more-than-human humanitarianism" to contradictory practices of suffering and compassion, killing and sacrifice, and compassion and consent that she witnessed in a variety of animal facilities and laboratories.

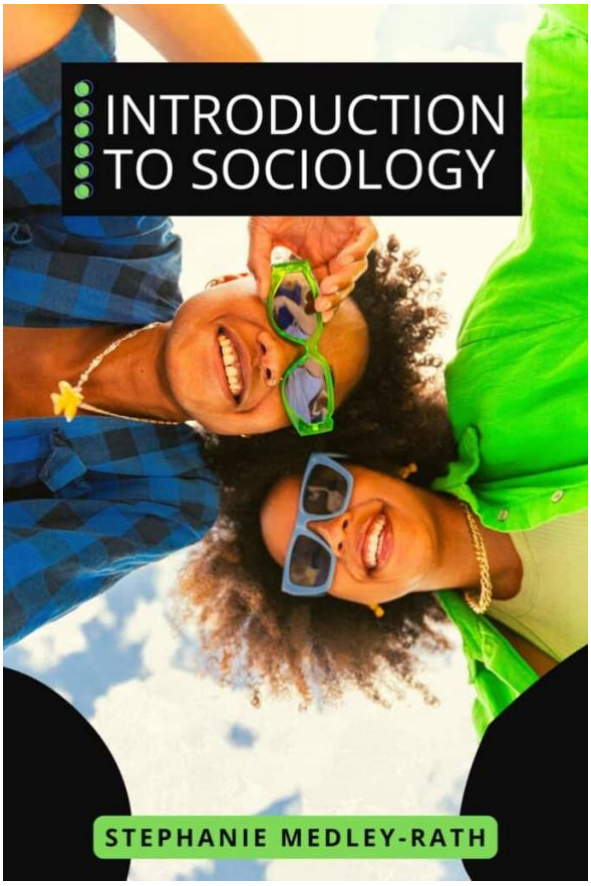


Book Cover (from NYU Press)

Friese proposes a new approach to the treatment of laboratory animals that recognizes the interconnectedness of all species and how human actions impact the welfare of other species and the planet as a whole. *A Mouse in a Cage* is an essential contribution to the ongoing conversation about the ethical treatment of animals."

Carrie Friese is Associate Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is the author of *Cloning Wild Life: Zoos, Captivity, and the Future of Endangered Animals*.

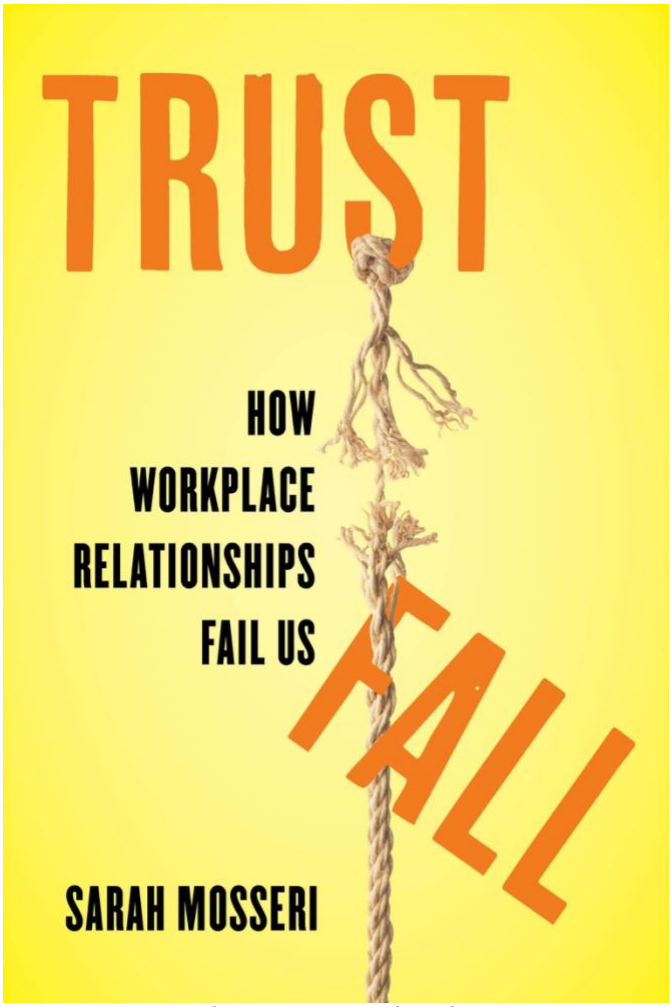
Medley-Rath, Stephanie. 2025. *Introduction to Sociology*.
https://sociologycoach.com/introducing-a-new-introduction-to-sociology-textbook/



The Sociology Coach website features Stephanie Medley-Rath's FREE Introduction to Sociology textbook. The book launches soon on Amazon as Kindle (979-8-9930626-0-0) and paperback (979-8-9930626-1-7), available for spring course adoptions. The 10-chapter textbook uses the sociological literacy framework, includes 100+ custom figures, highlighted careers, key terms, and review questions. The website also offers articles on sociology majors and career guidance.

Stephanie Medley-Rath is an associate professor of sociology at University of Indiana Kokomo and founder of *The Sociology Coach*.

Mosseri, Sarah. 2026. *Trust Fall: How Workplace Relationships Fail Us*. University of California Press. https://www.ucpress.edu/books/trust-fall/paper



Book Cover (from University of California Press)

"How do millions of Americans navigate today's demanding and unpredictable work terrain without the protection of strong labor laws, unions, or a reliable social safety net? They turn to trusted colleagues and supervisors to help find a way through the chaos. But is interpersonal trust truly a solution, or just another source of vulnerability?

In *Trust Fall,* Sarah Mosseri delves into the intricate web of workplace trust. Drawing on years of immersive research across diverse industries—from bustling restaurants and tech startups to marketing agencies and ride-hail circuits—she uncovers how the very bonds workers rely on to manage instability and insecurity often deepen their exposure to risk and exploitation.

Blending vivid storytelling with sharp sociological insight, *Trust Fall* reveals the seduction and costs of workplace trust. It gives readers the language to recognize and challenge the unspoken bargains workers make to belong, thrive, and survive in today's precarious labor landscape."

Sarah Mosseri is a sociologist specializing in labor, inequality, and the hidden dynamics of workplace culture, with a PhD from the University of Virginia and a Courtesy Fellowship with Johns Hopkins University.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Columbia Sociology PhD Student Yanze Ye who has been awarded three research fellowships from Columbia University and George Mason University to support his study in rare disease classification and orphan drug development in China! He is the recipient of the 2025 Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship from Columbia's Weatherhead East Asian Institute, the Humane Studies Fellowship from the Institute for Humane Studies, and the Elinor Ostrom Fellowship from the Mercatus Center.

In addition to these accomplishments, Yanze has been leading the China Reading & innovation Lab (CRiL) at Columbia University. CRiL is a graduate student-led initiative that aims to cultivate a dynamic community dedicated to exchanging scholarly ideas and transforming them into practical social benefits. In the 2025-26 academic year, CRiL maintains its commitment to fostering vibrant conversations on transnational sociological studies in science and technology, with a particular focus on the medical field in China. Visit the CRiL website or reach out to yanze.yu@columbia.edu for more info.